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The Czechoslovak Government has decided to maintain friendly relations with the Roman Catholic clergy even at the cost of some concessions. The motivation for this decision was the fact that the Government is aware of the influence of the clergy upon the opinion of the people and is trying to win the active support of the clergy in the propagation of Government measures. Minister of Information Vaclav Kopecky and Deputy Prime Minister Zdenek Fierlinger, who is entrusted with the running of the State Office for Church Affairs, both responsible for this new Government attitude toward the Church, asked the Institute for Research on Public Opinion to find out how great an influence the priests exercise in their sermons and pastoral activities on the opinion of the Czechoslovak population, especially the rural element. The Government came to the conclusion that its plan concerning the collectivization of villages, according to which cooperatives of the fourth type should be established within three years, cannot be carried out without the participation of the village priests. Also, in accordance with the intentions of the Government, the main work in the peace propaganda campaign is to be transferred to the priests.

2. Some priests carry out the desire of the Government and in their sermons prove, using Biblical quotations, that collective farming on estates with a just division of production is in harmony with Christian doctrine. Such priests also praise in their sermons the peace policy of the Soviet Union.

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